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Berndt, Cindy &lt;cindy.berndt@deq.virginia.gov&gt;

**Fwd: Union Hill Rural Historic District Study**

1 message

**Thompson, Tamera** <tamera.thompson@deq.virginia.gov>  
To: "Berndt, Cindy" <cindy.berndt@deq.virginia.gov>

Mon, Dec 3, 2018 at 3:08 PM

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Wagner, Marc** <marc.wagner@dhr.virginia.gov>  
Date: Fri, Nov 16, 2018 at 11:19 AM  
Subject: Union Hill Rural Historic District Study  
To: Tamera Thompson <tamera.thompson@deq.virginia.gov>

Hi Tamera: Here is the email I sent to Lakshmi on September 11, 2019. Marc

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Hi Lakshmi:

I have attached copies of my review questions that I sent along to Preservation Virginia in 2017. My questions were derived from my 4+ hours of driving the area. My perspective on Rural Historic Districts comes from review of 10+ of these more unusual types of districts so I have some experience on ones that have been listed and several that did not meet the criteria.

I have two overarching concerns about Union Hill/Woods Corner. The history is very compelling and there is no doubt about that. I know enough about Piedmont history that I would ask why this area is different, why it is picked out as a unit when similar history is found in other locations in Buckingham County and surrounding counties? Based on this context, one could argue that all of Buckingham County is a RHD, but then there is the issue of physical material to represent the history. The state/national registers is very material oriented so there needs to be critical mass to represent the significant history---and I acknowledge that African American history is a challenge because of the more fragile resources or the tendency to replace older churches with new buildings (for instance). At Yogaville, you had many, if not all, of the critical pieces to tell the story (for instance). A better comparison might be the Greenwood-Afton Rural Historic District in Albemarle County. The area has a similar evolution of plantation culture-railroad era development and African American enclaves. In Greenwood-Afton, Freetown and Newtown still survive as district and recognizable small villages. I have not driven this area in while and I know that both of these areas had many threatened buildings so the conditions may have changed: <https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/002-5075/>

The Southern Albemarle RHD also includes African American heritage context and some excellent surviving architecture, small villages:<https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/historic-registers/002-5075/>

Of equal concern, I saw the intense logging and deforestation of the terrain in large expanses in several area of the proposed RHD. This has a tendency to destroy archaeology; burial sites can be obliterated from this activity. It's already been over a year since I saw the area so my memory is now filled with may site visits...but, as I recall, I did not see a lot of surviving Reconstruction Era, and few early 20th century clustered settlements to represent the context of African American heritage. I did see a few churches and a few residences that could be considered for individual eligibility. I am not sure any of these were picked up in the required pipeline survey and what recommendations were made. I think the hired consultants might not have completed survey until after I had visited.

The PIF has some tracked in comments so you will need to turn on review markup in MS Word. If those don't convey, let me know and I can print and scan into a PDF for you.

Sincerely,  
Marc

**Marc C. Wagner**  
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**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**  
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**2 attachments**



**Union Hill-Woods Corner PIF Comments (1).docx**  
14K



**UnionHill-WoodsCornerPIF\_Feb 16 2017 MCW COMMENT (1) (1).docx**  
4337K